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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York
on Wednesday, 10 February 1993, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. WARD (Canada)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE 1993 REGULAR SESSION (continued)

(c) CHAIRMAN'S PROPOSAL ON BOARD PROCEDURES (continued)
(E/ICEF/1993/CRP.6/Rev.1)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the revised recommendation by the Chairman on the future work and procedures of the Executive Board (E/ICEF/1993/CRP.6/Rev.1).

2. Mr. FILHO (Brazil), referring to paragraph (c) of section 4, said that the Board could only take note of the outcome of official discussions. Accordingly, paragraph (c) should read: "The outcome of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations system in the economic, social and related fields".

3. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Board should adopt the recommendation by the Chairman on the future work and procedures of the Executive Board, as amended.

4. It was so decided.

(d) PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK, EXECUTIVE BOARD SESSION, 26 APRIL-7 MAY 1993 (E/ICEF/1993/1)

5. Mr. POST (Netherlands) said that since 1993 was a budget year, the time allocated to the Committee on Administration and Finance might not be sufficient. His delegation also felt that the Board should allocate some time for a discussion of the multi-donor evaluation of UNICEF, which was very useful. Furthermore, the time usually set aside for informal consultations on resolutions and decisions was often insufficient for reaching a consensus. The result was a chaotic schedule of parallel meetings. There were essentially two ways of dealing with that situation: the Board could hold more parallel meetings, which caused difficulties for a number of delegations, particularly smaller ones, or it could biennialize the general debate and schedule it for non-budget years, as was done in the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

6. Ms. MOLSON (Canada) said that the timetables for the Programme Committee and the Committee on Administration and Finance should be ordered so that the items for approval could be considered first, followed by the items for review. In general, more time should be allocated for major policy issues than for items for review.

7. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) said that he shared the concern of the representative of the Netherlands at the limited time available to the Committee on Administration and Finance. The holding of parallel meetings, introduced in 1992, had proved quite successful. Accordingly, his delegation proposed that the first meeting of the Committee on Administration and Finance should be moved up to Friday, 30 April, so that more time would be available. That would entail the holding of parallel meetings.

8. Mr. WILLIAMS (Secretary of the Executive Board) said that UNICEF had been allocated 30 meetings of conference servicing for the 1993 regular session. Under that arrangement, it would not be possible to hold two meetings in the same time slot without requesting an additional formal meeting.

9. Miss DIOP (Senegal) stressed the need to maintain the practice of holding a general debate at each regular session. While her delegation was not opposed to a discussion of the multi-donor evaluation, it felt that that should be done by rearranging the timetable for consideration of specific items. Lastly, virtually all the developing countries were opposed to the scheduling of further parallel meetings that coincided with meetings of the Board.

10. The CHAIRMAN said that the difficulty lay in the fact that the Board had a very full agenda. If something was added, something else would have to be eliminated. He recalled that, at the preceding meeting, the question had been raised as to whether there had been a specific request for a report on the Bamako Initiative in 1993.

11. Mr. JOLLY (Deputy Executive Director for Programmes) said that originally, the Board had decided to ask for a report on the Bamako Initiative for 1994. However, since there had been two requests for a report on that question in 1993, the Bureau had decided that a report should be produced for the forthcoming regular session. In the provisional timetable for the Programme Committee, 1 3/4 hours had been allocated for consideration of both item 4, on the Bamako Initiative, and item 5 on ensuring child survival, protection and development in Africa.

12. Miss DIOP (Senegal) said that the countries of the Group of 77 were somewhat unwilling to discuss the multi-donor evaluation of UNICEF at the regular session since they viewed that report as a background document. In any case, the multi-donor evaluation should not be discussed at the expense of the Bamako Initiative.

13. Mr. SIEBER (Switzerland) said that no one had intended to replace the consideration of the Bamako Initiative with a discussion of the multi-donor evaluation. In order to facilitate matters, his delegation proposed that consideration of the multi-donor evaluation should be incorporated into agenda item 16 of the provisional annotated agenda for the Programme Committee, on UNICEF and reform of the United Nations system.

14. Mr. CANTINI (Italy) said that it would be quite useful to have a discussion of the multi-donor evaluation, which dealt with a number of points of major interest to the Board. He saw no problem in including a discussion of the multi-donor evaluation in the agenda of the Programme Committee and therefore supported the proposal made by the representative of Switzerland.

15. With regard to item 2 of the Programme Committee's agenda, on the follow-up of the World Summit for Children, he felt that most delegations would deal with that issue in their statements in the general debate, and he therefore wondered whether the item required the two hours that had been allocated for it.

16. Mrs. VASISHT (India) agreed with the representative of Senegal that time was needed for the general debate, that the use of parallel meetings should not be encouraged and that the multi-donor evaluation report should be introduced in accordance with the normal procedure.

17. Mr. KABIR (Observer for Bangladesh) agreed that the Executive Board had a very full agenda and that it was therefore difficult to include any other item. Caution should be exercised in attempting to change the timetable prepared for the general debate, and his delegation could not support the holding of more parallel meetings. The suggestion by the representative of Switzerland that the multi-donor evaluation could be considered in conjunction with item 16 of the Programme Committee's agenda should be pursued further. He could not, however, agree to any reduction in the time allocated to the Programme Committee for the item on follow-up to the World Summit for Children.

18. Ms. POULSEN (Denmark) said that all delegations had issues of special concern, and the Board should endeavour to accommodate all interests. Clustering was a useful approach, and the Board might consider those items on which policy decisions were required before turning to other questions. The Board might also consider rationalizing its approach to country-programme issues, which would make more time available.

19. Mr. OVANESOV (Russian Federation) shared the concerns voiced by the representative of the Netherlands and expressed support for the proposal made by the representative of Switzerland. Lastly, recognizing that parallel meetings posed difficulties for many delegations, his delegation did not support any increase in such meetings.

20. Mr. BAILEY (Australia) said he supported the Canadian comments on rationalization of the Board's work and the Swiss proposal regarding agenda item 16.

21. Mrs. ARIAS (Colombia) agreed that parallel meetings should be avoided. In view of the comments made on rationalization, it was hardly appropriate to consider adding a further item to the agendas of the Board's 1993 regular session. Regarding the Swiss proposal, she did not think that the multi-donor evaluation should be formally included under item 16, although those delegations that wished to comment on the evaluation in that connection should be free to do so.

22. The CHAIRMAN said that the Executive Board would thus retain the general debate as scheduled in the provisional annotated agenda and organization of work, and would move policy decisions forward by rearranging elements within the agenda. Documents E/ICEF/1993/CRP.7 and CRP.8, containing the executive summary of the synthesis report of the multi-donor evaluation and the Executive Director's comments thereon, would be before the Executive Board at the 1993 regular session, so that the evaluation could be included under a number of items. He understood that there was little enthusiasm for parallel meetings.

23. Miss DIOP (Senegal) said that her delegation could agree to the Swiss proposal, even though the Executive Board might not be in a position to conclude its consideration of the multi-donor evaluation report, which was only just being made available.

24. Miss ERIKSSON (Sweden) agreed that it would be useful to consider the multi-donor evaluation under item 16.

25. The CHAIRMAN said that he would take it that it was the understanding of the Executive Board that the multi-donor evaluation report would be considered under agenda item 16 of the Programme Committee but would not be formally included thereunder.

26. It was so decided.

27. Mr. CANTINI (Italy) said that the title of Programme Committee agenda item 16, "UNICEF and reform of the United Nations system", was somewhat broad and suggested matters that were beyond the competence of the Executive Board. It would be preferable to align the title of the item with the title of General Assembly resolution 45/264, to read "UNICEF and restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields".

28. The CHAIRMAN said that the title of the agenda item would be reworded as proposed.

29. Mr. SIEBER (Switzerland) said that one way of improving the general debate would be to make better use of time by shortening the wide-ranging introduction made by the Executive Director, who might limit his statement to the main issues.

30. Mr. WILLIAMS (Secretary of the Executive Board) said that the Executive Director was himself conscious of the need to expedite the general debate in the manner suggested by the representative of Switzerland. Delegations should also ensure that their representatives spoke for the prescribed 10 minutes only, a time-limit which few members respected in practice.

31. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) said that his delegation continued to have doubts regarding the amount of time allocated to the Committee on Administration and Finance for consideration of budgetary matters. Perhaps more time could be made available to that Committee by reducing the time spent by the Programme Committee on agenda items 6 (f) and 12, for which five hours had been scheduled.

32. Ms. MOLSON (Canada) asked whether item 16 of the Programme Committee agenda was actually for review and Board approval, as indicated in the provisional annotated agenda.

33. Mr. JOLLY (Deputy Executive Director for Programmes) said that Programme Committee agenda item 6 (f) covered global funds and interregional projects, and it was unlikely that the time scheduled could be reduced. Regarding agenda item 12, he was not in a position to indicate that Executive Board members would not wish to spend time on the issue, particularly given the questions that had arisen relating to sustainable development and the links between UNICEF and Agenda 21.

34. Mr. ZIEDLER (Germany) said that it was important for the Board to avoid duplication; he therefore questioned the need for coverage in the general debate as well as in the Programme Committee of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children and the item on children, environment and development. Those two items could be considered together in the Programme Committee, bearing in mind that they would already have been covered in the general debate. Equally, there appeared to be some overlap between Programme Committee items 3 and 6 (f).

35. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) agreed that Programme Committee items 3 and 6 (f) could be consolidated.

36. Mr. JOLLY (Deputy Executive Director for Programmes) said that the question of global funds arose in different contexts: post changes and related issues, which were dealt with in the Committee on Administration and Finance; the programme dimension of global funds; and, lastly, under Programme Committee item 6 (f). If the various aspects were to be consolidated, it would be better to do so under the last-mentioned item. With regard to item 16 of the Programme Committee agenda, some elements did require action by the Board. The Executive Board would note that the secretariat was required to submit a report pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/199 under that item, on which the Board might also wish to take action.

37. The CHAIRMAN observed that delegations could control the discussion on any agenda item by being less prolix, which would then make time available to move items up. Equally, if delegations arrived on time so that a prompt start was possible, more time would be available.

38. Mr. STRACHAN (United Kingdom) suggested that the timetable of the Committee on Administration and Finance could be altered so that items 4 and 5 were considered on the Monday before the drafting session, since the Board's experience had been that the first two items were usually disposed of quickly.

39. Mr. SIEBER (Switzerland) supported that suggestion, saying that it was important to leave ample time for the discussion of budgets.

40. THE CHAIRMAN said that the provisional annotated agenda would be reissued with the changes agreed to by the Board in time for the April 1993 session.

(e) THEMES OF INFORMAL MEETINGS

41. Mr. WILLIAMS (Secretary of the Executive Board) reminded members of the Board that only nine time slots would be available for informal discussions during the 1993 regular session and that it would therefore be best if a consensus could be reached on reducing the number of topics for discussion from 11, as proposed in the provisional agenda, to 9. Two topics could conceivably be considered in parallel on a given morning, but that way of proceeding had not, in the Board's experience, been a particularly fruitful one.

42. Mr. KABIR (Oberver for Bangladesh) said that all 11 topics proposed were important, but that his delegation would like to see priority given to the World Nutrition Conference, education for all by the year 2000, regional follow-up on national programmes of action, and impact of emergencies on country programmes.

43. Ms. RODSMOEN (Norway) said that her delegation felt that one more topic ought to be added, namely family planning. While a policy paper on the subject was soon to be issued, she felt that a useful discussion could nevertheless be held in informal sessions.

44. Ms. MOLSON (Canada) said that UNICEF follow-up to the multi-donor evaluation and inter-agency cooperation and United Nations reform should be given priority.

45. Mrs. VASISHT (India) welcomed the proposal by Norway for an item on family planning, even if it had to be considered in parallel with other topics.

46. Ms. MANSARAY (Sierra Leone) also supported the Norwegian proposal.

47. Ms. LIEDES (Observer for Finland) expressed support for the proposal put forward by the representative of Norway and suggested that informal discussions of a given topic should be held before the topic was taken up formally.

48. Ms. POULSEN (Denmark) said that her delegation had a particular interest in UNICEF follow-up to multi-donor evaluation, women in development, and family planning. She welcomed the suggestion by the Observer for Finland and made the further suggestion that the morning session should be used for regional presentations.

49. Ms. SHEAROUSE (United States of America) said that her delegation would accord a lower priority to education for all by the year 2000 and women in development.

50. Mr. ZIELDER (Germany) said that Germany had a special interest in UNICEF follow-up to multi-donor evaluation, inter-agency cooperation and United Nations reform, Central and Eastern Europe and the newly independent States, and impact of emergencies on country programmes.

51. Mr. SIKKANDER (Sri Lanka) said that his delegation considered regional follow-up on national programmes of action to be of great importance.

52. Mr. MAYORGA-CORTES (Nicaragua) stated that his delegation considered priority items to be those on women in development (with particular emphasis on the girl child), inter-agency cooperation and United Nations reform, and impact of emergencies on country programmes.

53. Miss ERIKSSON (Sweden) said that her delegation considered the topic of women in development to be of extreme importance and would also accord priority to UNICEF follow-up to multi-donor evaluation and family planning.

54. Miss JANJUA (Pakistan) said that her delegation took a particular interest in education for all by the year 2000, the baby-friendly hospital initiative, regional follow-up on national programmes of action, and impact of emergencies on country programmes.

55. Ms. MBIMBA (Angola) welcomed the suggestion by the representative of Norway and said that the other priorities for her delegation were education for all by the year 2000, regional follow-up on national programmes of action, and women in development.

56. Mr. OVANESOV (Russian Federation) considered all the topics important ones, and was pleased at the inclusion of the item on Central and Eastern Europe and the newly independent States, as well as at the fact that other delegations had given it priority. In addition to that item, his delegation wished to focus attention on inter-agency cooperation and United Nations reform, impact of emergencies on country programmes, and family planning.

57. Miss DIOP (Senegal) said that her delegation's priorities were those expressed by the representative of Nicaragua. She was concerned that no consensus could be reached on reducing the number of topics, and felt that the Board might be reduced to drawing lots.

58. Mr. ADOUKI (Congo) thought that the true problem lay elsewhere. The idea of reducing the number of topics for discussion was a good one, but would be of little benefit unless the organization of the informal sessions was also improved so that all interested delegations could participate.

59. Mrs. BENNANI (Observer for Morocco) said that her delegation considered education for all by the year 2000 and impact of emergencies on country programmes, to be priorities. With respect to the item on women in development, she agreed with the representative of Nicaragua that particular attention should be paid to the role of the girl child.

60. The CHAIRMAN said that the discussion thus far revealed that a relatively lower priority should be given to the World Nutrition Conference, the baby-friendly hospital initiative, AIDS, and prospects for elimination of selected childhood diseases.

61. Mrs. ARIAS (Colombia) said that her delegation would be willing to support the elimination of those four topics, and suggested the addition of another - street children - to bring the total to nine.

62. Mr. TANTOT (France) commended the representative of the Congo for his suggestion. All of the suggested topics were important ones, but regardless of which ones were ultimately selected, it was essential that all delegations should have the opportunity to participate in the most positive and fruitful way possible. His delegation's own preferences with regard to topics were for the items on women in development, AIDS, inter-agency cooperation and United Nations reform, and impact of emergencies on country programmes.

63. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, as in previous years, the secretariat should tally the preferences expressed by the Board and choose the themes accordingly.

64. It was so decided.

OTHER MATTERS

65. Ms. POULSEN (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Community, asked the Executive Director whether a report could be expected at the April 1993 session of the Executive Board on the implementation of the Secretary-General's resolution on reduction of high-level staff at UNICEF.

66. Mr. GRANT (Executive Director) said that a report on that subject would be forthcoming and would be discussed during the debate on budget proposals.

(Mr. Grant)

67. He added that it was proposed to hold a memorial service for Audrey Hepburn on the evening of Friday, 30 April 1993, with the agreement of Miss Hepburn's family. The service would constitute the major commemoration of her passing, since her funeral had taken place privately in Switzerland. An Audrey Hepburn Memorial Fund for contributions to UNICEF was also being planned.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.